

unpatentable over Koga et al and Taussig et al (U.S. Patent No. 6,181,050); and Claims 4, 6, and 7 were indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the early indication of allowable subject matter. In light of this indication Claims 1-3, 5, and 11-21 have been canceled and Claims 4 and 6 have been rewritten in independent form including all the features of their base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 7, 8, 9, and 10 depend on now independent Claim 6, and new Claims 22 and 23, identical to Claims 9 and 10, respectively, depend on now independent Claim 4. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 4 and 6 and each claim depending therefrom are allowable.

New Claims 24-29 are similar to Claims 19-21 but recite the features of independent Claims 4 and 6. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 24-29 are allowable for similar reasons as discussed above.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion and in view of the present amendment, the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Finally, the attention of the Patent Office is directed to the change of address of Applicant's representative, effective January 6, 2003:

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Respectfully submitted,

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IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

--1-3. (Canceled)

4. (Amended) An electrostatic actuator comprising:

first and second electrode portions arranged at predetermined intervals, each portion including one or more series of electrodes arranged successively in a predetermined direction;

a slider disposed between the first and second electrode portions having electrode portions at side faces opposed to the first and second electrode portions and movable in the predetermined direction;

an electrostatic capacitance detecting circuit configured to detect electrostatic capacitances between the one or more series of electrodes of one of the first and second electrode portions and the electrode portions of the slider; and

a driving circuit configured to drive the slider in the predetermined direction by applying voltages between selected series of electrodes of one of the first and the second electrode portions and the electrode portions of the slider, said selected series of electrodes being selected based on a detected result of the electrostatic capacitance detecting circuit,

wherein the first and second electrode portions comprise:

driving electrodes configured to drive the slider, and

electrostatic capacitance detecting electrodes configured to detect the electrostatic capacitances, and

[The electrostatic actuator according to Claim 2,] wherein the driving electrodes are shifted by a half of an alignment pitch along the predetermined direction from the electrostatic capacitance detecting electrodes.

5. (Canceled)

6. (Amended) An electrostatic actuator comprising:

first and second electrode portions arranged at predetermined intervals, each portion including one or more series of electrodes arranged successively in a predetermined direction;

a slider disposed between the first and second electrode portions having electrode portions at side faces opposed to the first and second electrode portions and movable in the predetermined direction;

an electrostatic capacitance detecting circuit configured to detect electrostatic capacitances between the one or more series of electrodes of one of the first and second electrode portions and the electrode portions of the slider; and

a driving circuit configured to drive the slider in the predetermined direction by applying voltages between selected series of electrodes of one of the first and the second electrode portions and the electrode portions of the slider, said selected series of electrodes being selected based on a detected result of the electrostatic capacitance detecting circuit,

wherein the electrode portions of the slider are provided along the predetermined direction and comprises:

driving electrode portions configured to drive the slider, and

electrostatic capacitance detecting electrode portions configured to drive the
electrostatic capacitances, and

[The electrostatic actuator according to Claim 5,] wherein the driving electrode portions are shifted by a half of an alignment pitch along the predetermined direction from the electrostatic capacitance detecting electrode portions.

8. (Amended) The electrostatic actuator according to Claim [1] 6, wherein the first and second electrode portions are provided with both a function of driving the slider and a function of detecting the electrostatic capacitances.

9. (Canceled) The electrostatic actuator according to Claim [1] 6, wherein the first and second electrode portions are provided on a stator.

10. (Amended) The electrostatic actuator according to Claim [1] 6, wherein the slider comprises a lens producing an image of an object, the lens being disposed on the slider, orthogonal to the predetermined direction.

11-21. (Canceled)

22-29. (New)--